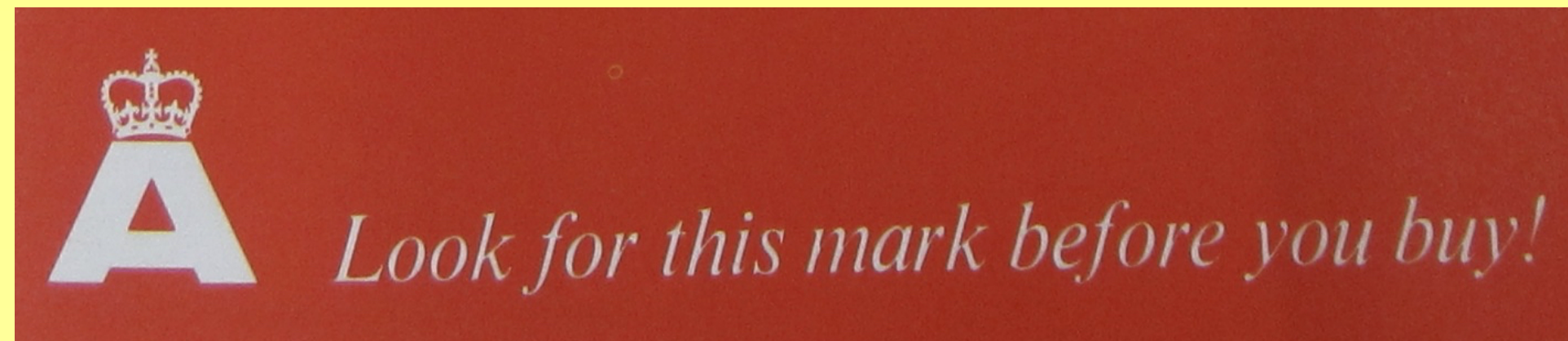


Controlling Garden Chemicals in 1960s Britain

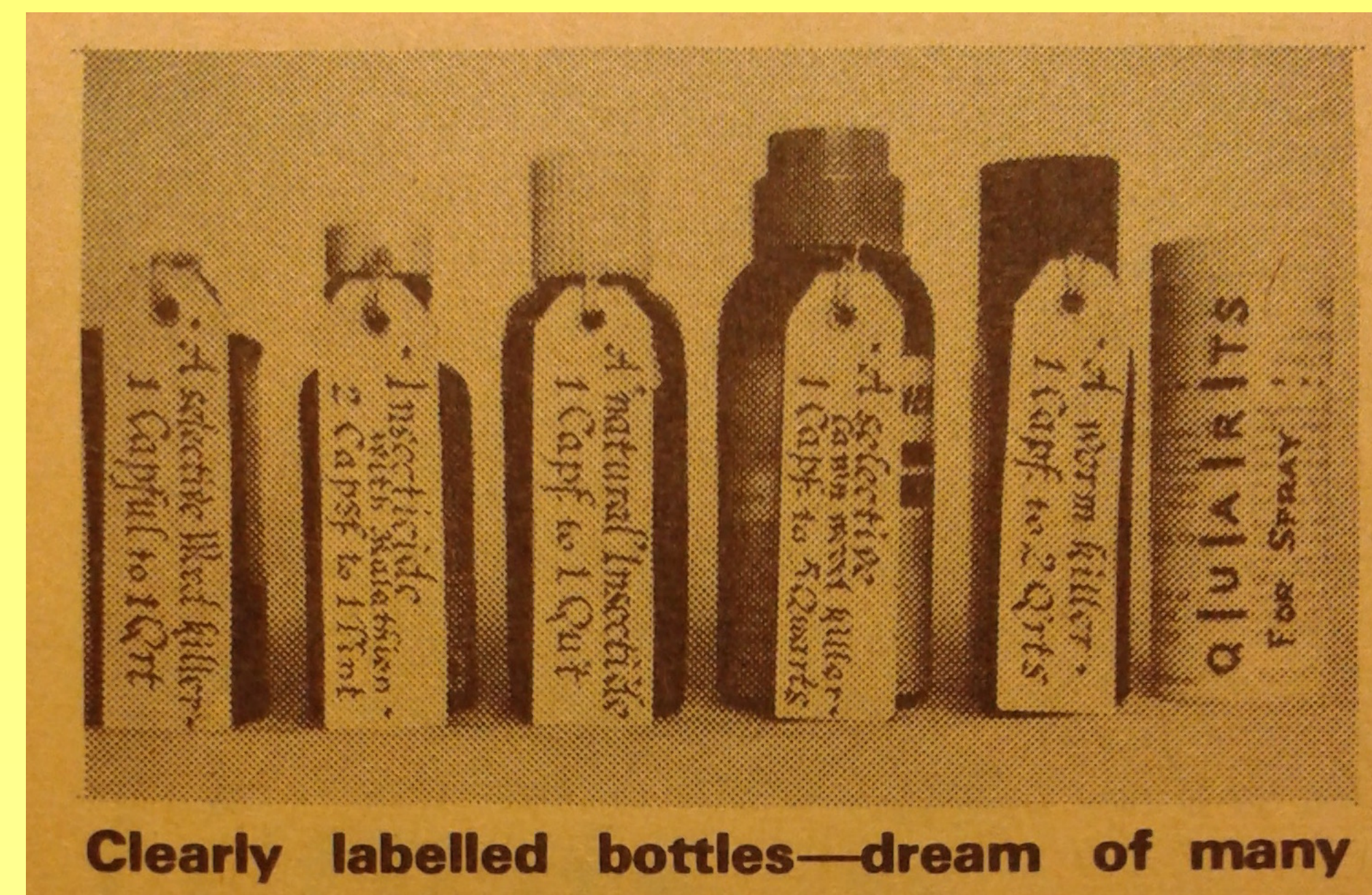
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From 1957, chemical companies voluntarily submitted new garden chemicals to scrutiny from expert committees who formed the Pesticides Safety Precautionary Scheme and the Agricultural Chemicals Approval Scheme. This symbol communicated to users that the product had undergone this process and been approved.



Manufacturers did not want to scare users, but they did want them to behave safely. Labels were the first thing to be re-examined by the experts and manufacturers, then changed if accidents happened. Even the formulation of the chemical or how it was sold could be changed in response to user behaviour.



This picture shows that gardeners were not always in agreement with manufacturers and legislators about the most important information. Users prioritised clear, legible details on how to use the product. As labels were sized proportionally to the package, it made the writing very small and hard to read.

When accidents happened with garden chemicals the users bore responsibility. They did not mobilise like professional workers who were represented by unions. Instead they counted on Members of Parliament.

MPs regularly stood up for consumers' interests. Joyce Butler was particularly interested in chemicals.

- Campaigned for better labelling so people could make informed choices
- Introduced the Farm and Garden Chemicals Act 1967
- Argued for the booklet Chemicals for the Gardener to be rewritten in response to outdated information regarding chemicals understood to be harmful.

